A

MISSTATEMENT

IN THE

"EPISCOPAL JOURNAL" OF BISHOP RAVENSCROFT,

CORRECTED.

Salisbury:
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.....
1827.

THE undersigned, Elders and Deacons of the Lutheran Church in Salisbury, have read with surprise and regret, the manner in which *Bishop Ravenscroft*, in his "Episcopal Journal," has noticed the "interference in appointments," which happened in this place about the time of his last visit. As what the Bishop has there said is not only essentially erroneous, but conveys an indirect censure on the "other denominations" alluded to, we feel reluctantly driven to the necessity of correcting his misstatement, in the same public manner in which it was made; otherwise our silence might be taken as an admission of the truth of his assertions.

The following are the remarks of the Bishop, to which we have reference:

"During my visit to this place, an interference in appointments took place, which gave me the opportunity to press upon the members of the Church the necessity, as well as the propriety, of providing a place of worship for themselves. *And though the present building has been erected almost entirely at the expense of Episcopalians, yet as the ground was originally given for what is called a Free Church, and each denomination has an equal right to the use of it,* I recommended to surrender it altogether, to submit to the loss, should the other denominations refuse a reasonable reimbursement, and rent some convenient place for present use, until they could provide the means of erecting a suitable building for themselves; and I have reason to believe that this, or such other course as will prevent all collision, will be pursued."

In these few remarks, the Bishop has made two assertions, both of which are palpably incorrect. One is: "That the ground (in question) was originally given for what is called a free church, and each denomination has an equal right to the use of it;" The other is: "That the present building has been erected almost entirely at the expense of the Episcopalians."

That Bishop Ravenscroft is entirely mistaken in the first assertion, namely, as to the ground, will fully appear from the words of the DEED itself, executed on the 9th day of September, 1768, by John Lewis Beard, a professed Lutheran, and a member of the church then existing in Salisbury.

"This Indenture, made the 9th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1768, between John Lewis Beard, &c. of the one part, and Michael Brown, Michael Moore, Casper Gienther and Peter Reeb, *Trustees of the German Lutheran congregation in the town of Salisbury*, of the other part, Witnesseth," &c.—"doth grant, bargain," &c. "unto the said trustees *of the said congregation, and to their successors in that office, forever*," "to have and to hold," &c. "*unto the said German Lutheran Congregation*, in and about the said town of Salisbury, for to erect and to build thereon a Church, or meeting-house, *for the only proper use and behoof of the said German Lutheran Congregation, forever.*" "And it is further agreed by the parties to these presents, that it shall be allowed, *by the approbation of the Minister, trustees, and elders of said congregation*, that any lawful minister of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall have liberty to preach in the said Church, if he can and do show a sufficient testimonial, in writing, either from the High Church of England, or from the reformed Calvin Ministers, *at such time as the said Lutheran Ministers doth not want to perform divine service in said Church.*"

This is a correct extract from the deed, executed as above stated, regularly registered and recorded. Without any comments on our part, we leave it with the public to say, whether the letter or meaning of that instrument will bear the Bishop out in his assertion, "*that the ground was originally given for what is called a free church, and each denomination has an equal right to the use of it.*"

It now remains for us to show, that Bishop Ravenscroft is equally mistaken in his other assertion, "that the present buiding has been erected almost entirely at the expense of the Episcopalians."

A short time after the ground in question was granted, as before stated, the Lutherans proceeded to build thereon a house of worship, which always went by the name of the "Lutheran Church," and was uniformly occupied by the congregation. In 1788, the Rev. Charles A. G. Storke, a pious and learned divine of the Lutheran church, settled in Salisbury as the regular pastor of the congregation, and preached in the church for a number of years, or until he re-

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moved to the country to take charge of other congregations. After his removal, the congregation began to lose its organization; and the house, from neglect, went considerably to decay. Subsequently to Mr. Storke's removal, it was seldom occupied for preaching, particularly after the completion of the New Court-House, which, on account of its central situation, was generally preferred by preachers of all denominations. Things continued in this situation until about the year 1812—'13, when the Females of the place started a subscription for building a house of public worship for the use of the Town. There being no regularly organized congregation in Salisbury, all classes of the citizens united in the subscription to build a house of public worship. The words of the subscription itself, set forth the object, and explicitly designated that the church was to be erected on the Lutheran Church ground. To this paper was subscribed the sum of $1,291. Some of the most zealous of the subscribers met together, and appointed agents to contract for, and to superintend the building of the new Church. The old house was set up at auction, and actually bid off at about $100; it was torn down, and removed, and the present building erected on the very same spot where the old one stood. Before the new house was built, and more particularly after its completion, a dissatisfaction arose among some of the subscribers about the management of the business; the consequence of which was, that some of them refused to pay. But Messrs. Locke and Allemong, merchants of this place, having, in some manner, become bound to the builders, they met the contract, and asserted a claim on the house for the sum paid by them over and above what the subscription had realized. These gentlemen made repeated efforts to obtain re-payment of the sum advanced by them; but circumstances always prevented success. The matter, therefore, continued unsettled; and, while thus unsettled, a part of the subscribers united with other individuals in forming a Presbyterian congregation in this place.

A year or two thereafter, Bishop Ravenscroft paid his

first visit to Salisbury, and succeeded in bringing together and organizing an Episcopal congregation,—the first Episcopal congregation or Church that ever existed in Salisbury.

The surviving members of the Lutheran Church, with others, also met together, and revived their ancient congregation. Thus, in a short period of time, three congregations sprung up, and each obtained a stated preacher to administer to them. This new state of things started the question, Who shall have the new church?

The *Presbyterians*, although several of their members had paid their subscription, never for a moment set up any claim as a body, either to the ground or the house. Having, by the formation of another society, separated themselves from the mass of the subscribers, they quietly proceeded to raise funds to build a house of worship for themselves; and, in the mean time, they perform divine service in the Court-House;—excepting on sacramental occasions; when, by invitation, they use the Church.

The *Episcopalians*, however, set up a claim as well to the ground as to the house. The Bishop, we presume, has stated their grounds of claim in that part of his journal to which we take exception.

The *Lutherans*, on their part, very naturally turned their minds to the spot granted to their church as a place of worship,—where their predecessors had for so many years worshipped, and where repose the remains of their departed kindred and friends. They, therefore, under the deed above quoted, set up an exclusive claim to the ground; but as to the house, they only contended that they had as much right to the use of it as any other denomination.

At this stage of the question it was, that the "interference in appointments" alluded to by the Bishop, took place. We shall not here detail the circumstances of that interference; but we embrace the occasion to declare, that not the slightest shadow of the blame arising out of that occurrence, can with propriety be attached to the Lutheran Preacher or congregation. The incident, however, impressed both parties

with the necessity of settling the question as to who should hold the house. Accordingly, a conference and a correspondence took place between the two denominations. On the part of the Episcopalians, two propositions were submitted; both of which were rejected, for the reason that they contemplated a disposal of the ground,—the Lutherans holding that the ground was theirs, and could not become a subject of negotiation. They, however, in turn, offered two propositions, in the words following: "1st. The Lutherans consent that the Episcopalians may move off the house from the ground, on condition they pay the claim of Messrs. Locke and Allemong, and also satisfy such of the subscribers as have paid their subscription. If this be not agreed to, then, as another effort in the cause of friendship, the Lutherans, 2dly, propose to submit the matter in controversy to the investigation and decision of four disinterested men, to be mutually chosen by the parties."

On receiving these propositions, the gentlemen acting on the part of the Episcopalians, desired time to consult their constituents. After several weeks delay, the result was, that they acceded to neither proposition, but wholly dropped all further claim on the house and ground: Whereupon, the Lutherans went forward and paid Messrs. Locke and Allemong $940 57, that being the amount claimed by them. The original cost of the house was considerably more than the amount of the subscription: the cost was, $1605 57

Towards this sum, was paid by five persons attached to the Episcopalian church, (only two of whom are members) - - - - - - 350

Leaving to be otherwise paid, - - - 1259 57

This latter sum was further reduced by payments made by other subscribers, to - - - 940 57

And in the end, this sum was paid, as stated above, by the Lutheran congregation.

Here, again, we respectfully submit for the public to say, whether this statement of facts will bear the Bishop out in

his assertion, "*that the present building has been erected almost entirely at the expense of the Episcopalians.*"

In closing our remarks, we take occasion to disclaim the thought that Bishop Ravenscroft has designedly made these misrepresentations: we think too favorably of his piety and candour, to indulge the opinion. We believe, that, by some means or other, he has been misinformed and misled in the matter. This, however, does not make it less our duty to ward off the prejudice his remarks are calculated to draw upon us. Why we have not sooner done this, is owing altogether to the fact, that the Bishop's Journal never fell into our hands until within a short time past.

Being satisfied of the truth of our statement, as the Bishop will be when he examines the facts of the case, we indulge the hope, that in his next Journal he will correct the error committed in his last one.

JOHN BEARD, Sen. } *Elders.*
GEORGE VOGLER. }

JAMES BROWN, } *Deacons.*
ROBERT MULL, }